

Independent Energy Providers in Africa

Across Africa approximately 600 million people still use candles to light their homes at night. Many live in rural areas. Distances are too big to connect these people to traditional electricity supplies. In West Africa, the result is that only a few people have access to electricity. According to the World Bank, in 2014 this was less than 20% in Burkino Faso and 15% in Niger. A more recent report said that more than 50% of West Africans had no access to electricity.

That is why there is more and more interest in renewable energy. Every country has natural resources – wind, sun and water – that can be used. It is simply a question of innovative thinking.

The small island nation of Cabo Verde is a good example of success and ambition. 90% of its citizens have access to electricity. But it wants to make sure that by 2025 all the energy will be 100% renewable. Scientists say the country can do this if it mixes all three energy sources.

Interest is spreading across the region. In 2016 Cote D'Ivoire signed a contract to build the country's first solar power plant. In 2018 they announced that two more plants will be built in the north of the country. In 2017 Burkina Faso announced the construction of a large solar power plant at Zagtouli, not far from the capital.

But it is not governments who are taking the lead in this. It is independent energy providers. These are companies that invest in researching new technology and developing it for specific situations. Before, governments controlled the energy in their countries. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, they started to allow private companies and foreign companies to help build new power plants. Finally, there was enough investment and soon everyone will benefit from this.

New words for this article

Candle	a stick of wax
Renewable energy	energy from a source that is not burned
To spread	to cover a large surface area
Solar power plant	place for generating electricity using sunlight
To take the lead	to be the person responsible

Comprehension Questions True/False

Indiquez si les expressions suivantes sont vraies (True) ou fausses (False).

1. People don't have electricity because they live away from cities
2. Fewer than half the people in West Africa have electricity
3. By 2025 everyone will have electricity in Cabo Verde
4. There are 3 solar power plants in Cote d'Ivoire
5. Governments control the power supply in their countries

5	False
4	True
3	False
2	False
1	True

Comprehension questions

Answers